



9 Tips for Top of the Rock

Always high on the list for many NYC visitors is Rockefeller Center's [Top of the Rock](#), the 70th-floor Observation Deck with astonishing views of Manhattan and beyond. And if you live here ... it's like nothing you've seen before. Treat a guest, or just yourself, to one of the city's most uplifting experiences this season.

1. First, a little history. When the RCA Building (now known as 30 Rock) opened in 1933, the observation deck was the first attraction to open to the public. Inspired by a luxury cruise liner, it had Adirondack chairs, potted evergreens and an outdoor refreshment bar to go with the knockout vista, and it became a sensation, drawing 1,300 visitors a day. The deck was closed in 1986, and after extensive refurbishing inside and out, reopened as Top of the Rock on November 1, 2005. Occupying the 67th, 69th and 70th floors (the last of which is open-air, rather than bordered by safety glass, since it's set back from the edge), it offers jaw-dropping 360-degree views—including the close-up Empire State Building, around to Central Park, and extending all the way up to the Tappan Zee Bridge—for more than three million visitors a year. Read more about the launch, the restoration of the observation deck and the landmark sights [here](#).

2. Which famous faces have been spotted on the rooftop of 30 Rock? From the early days you can see Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly singing *New York, New York* there in 1949's [On the Town](#). In more recent years, you can see everyone from [Jimmy Fallon with Jon Hamm](#) and [Cameron Diaz](#) having some fun with fans to U2 shooting their [latest video](#) this past fall. And then there are the countless [Instagrams](#) starring people from all over the world...

3. Top of the Rock is a favorite for romance. First dates, [Valentine's memories](#) and wedding dances all make up part of the photo album, and it's a treasured place for [proposals](#) too.

4. Nighttime is gorgeous, but mornings are magical too. Just after the 8am opening you'll have a more private experience, and catch the beautiful light illuminating the Empire State Building and Midtown skyscrapers. (Purchase a [Sun & Stars upgrade](#) to visit twice in 24 hours.)

5. Get to know the lay of the land with [Top of the Rock app](#), free and available for both iOS and Android. Eye-opening features include the Viewfinder, to guide you around the NYC skyline, and the Wayfinder, to point the way to shops, eateries and amenities all around the Rock.

6. A great way to visit is not only to [reserve ahead](#) (essential around the holidays) but to purchase a [combo ticket](#)— bringing together a visit to Top of the Rock with a [Rockefeller Center tour](#)—or a [VIP pass](#) for expedited entry, as well as access during peak sold-out times.
7. Photos are one of the most popular keepsakes, but there's more memorabilia to explore. The [gift shop](#) (at the top and in the Concourse) provides everything from T-shirts to mugs to magnets to backpacks. Learn about some of the souvenirs [here](#).
8. Some other important info can be found on the site's [FAQ](#) page. Be aware that you can't see the [Christmas Tree](#) or [Rink](#) from Top of the Rock, and plan ahead to time your visit. With hours varying only on select holidays (such as Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, when it closes at 10pm, and New Year's Day, when it opens at 10am), the elevators—which are part of the experience—first go up at 8am, with the last ascending at 11:15pm most nights, and the observation deck closing at midnight. Be prepared for the line that winds its way through the mezzanine exhibition, including a photo op with the "[Lunch Atop a Skyscraper](#)" image, before you board. [SixtyFive](#) (the cocktail bar adjoining the [Rainbow Room](#)) also has a stellar view, but is not connected to Top of the Rock. There is no food or drink at the attraction—and none can be brought up (and neither can pocket knives, lighters and other prohibited items mentioned in the FAQ)—though there are plenty of [dining options](#) in the Plaza and the Concourse.
9. Top of the Rock tickets can be purchased [here](#). Entrances (and box-office ticket counters) are located at on 50th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues at the NBC marquee (with the "[Joie](#)" [crystal chandelier](#) inside) and in the [Concourse](#). Check the [Rock Center map](#), [vacation planner](#) and our [Purely Practical Guide](#) for more info. See you at the top!

Source: <https://www.rockefellercenter.com/magazine/arts-culture/top-rock-trip-planning-tips/>

Date: 11/20/2017

Retrieved: 12/1/2020